coupled with higher domestic consumption and export demand for Indian Tea.

(c) In order to check the rise in prices of Tea the Government has taken various steps which include (i) directive of the Tea Board to the producers for strict compliance with the provisions of Tea Marketing (Control) Order, 1984 (ii) relaxation of policy regarding sale of tea in the Domestic Tariff Area (DTA) by Export Oriented Units and Units in Export Processing (Free Trade Zones for a period of six months upto June, 1998 (iii) supply of Nivendan Tea to the consumers at cheaper prices etc.

Decline in Exports

2040. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have achieved target of exports of various products from the country;

(b) which are the major sectors where the exports have declined;

(c) the main reasons for the decline in exports;

(d) what steps Government have taken to support the balance of exports to imports; and

(e) whether Government have formulated any new policies to control the decline in exports and to protect the economy of the country?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HDGDE): (a) Against a provisional target of US $40800 million for 1998-99, the export value during April-November, 1998-99 was US $ 23074 million (including Computer Software export data from Electronics and Computer Sofotware Export Promotion Council) as per the provisional data from Directorate General of Commerical Intelligence & Statistics.

(b) According to provisional data from Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistics (DGCIS), during April-November, 1998-99, exports of agricultural and allied products, marine products, ores and minerals, leather and manufactures, footwear sport goods chemicals and related products, engineering goods electronics (hardware), project goods,.cotton yarn fabrics made-ups, man made textiles made ups, wool and woollen manufactures and Jute manufactures, carpets, cotton raw incl. waste and petroleum products have shown negative growth in dollar terms.

(c) Decline in the rate of exports have premarily been due to South East Asian Currency crisis and world wide recession.

(d) and (e) A number of steps have been taken to promote exports which include lowering of interest rates on export credit, reduction in transaction cost through decentralisation and simplification of procedures and various other measures as enumberated in the Exin Policy. Steps have also been taken to promote export through multilateral and bilateral intiatives, identification of thrust sectors and focus regions. The Government is also initiating action through several measures to facilitate investment in sectors with strong export potential, encourage diversification of India's export basket, address infrastructure short comings, improve export facilitation measures and thus enhance the overall competitiveness of Indian export. The Government is according high priority to exports and all necessary steps are being taken to put exports on high growth trajectory.

Escrow Accounts Facility

2041. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the criteria for granting Escrow Accounts Facility;

(b) the number of countries with which India has such acconting facility; and

(c) the number of business houses and individuals granted this facility during the last three years?